

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Today, Congressman Jim Moran (D-08) joined Senators Tim Kaine and Mark R. Warner, Congressmen Rob Wittman (R-01), Bobby Scott (D-03), and Gerry Connolly (D-11), and members of Virginia tribes to announce legislation to grant federal recognition to six Virginia Native American tribes. The bill, the “Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Act” was introduced by Moran and Kaine in the House and Senate, respectively.

The legislation would grant federal recognition to the Chickahominy, the Eastern Chickahominy, the Upper Mattaponi, the Rappahannock, the Monacan, and the Nansemond tribes. These tribes have received official recognition from the Commonwealth of Virginia and submitted petitions to the Interior Department Bureau of Indian Affairs, but the federal government has yet to act on their applications.

“In the name of decency, fairness, and humanity, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and bring closure to centuries of injustice Virginia’s tribes have experienced,” **said Rep. Moran**. “Federal recognition is long past due, and with strong bipartisan support, this should be the year Virginia’s tribes finally receive the recognition they have earned.”

Virginia’s tribes have a unique history that has left them without required documentation, making federal recognition a painfully slow and costly administrative process that few predict will be completed in their lifetime. Specifically, the Virginia tribes lack formal treaties with the U.S. Government, having signed treaties with the Kings of England, the most significant treaty in May 1677 well before the establishment of the United States. The Racial Integrity Act of 1924 also led to a “paper genocide,” which destroyed birth records, marriage certificates, and land titles of Virginia’s tribes.

“Over 400 years after the founding of the first American colony in Jamestown, we owe it to Virginia’s tribes to see that their rightful status is recognized at the federal level and in the history of our nation,” **said Sen. Kaine**. “For too long they’ve paid the price for the careless practices and policies of others. I’m proud to introduce this legislation today in the U.S. Senate to seek the federal recognition that these Tribes deserve.”

Federal recognition would grant Virginia’s tribes legal standing and status in relationships with the U.S. government. This status would enable the tribes to pursue repatriation of historical and cultural artifacts, comment on federal agency actions that could affect their future, and gain

access to a number of federal programs that serve the other 565 federally recognized tribes.

“This is an issue of fairness. The Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Monacan, Nansemond, Rappahannock and Upper Mattaponi tribes of Virginia deserved to receive federal recognition long ago, and this legislation is necessary to make that happen,” **Sen. Warner said**. “I am proud to have been supportive of federal recognition of these Native American tribes ever since I served as Governor. I will continue to work for recognition through Senate passage of this legislation.”

“I’m pleased to join with my colleagues to support Federal recognition of Virginia’s Indian tribes,” **said Rep. Wittman**. “These tribes are important culturally and historically to the First District, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, and have been intertwined with the birth of our Nation for over 400 years. It is beyond time to recognize these tribes and I encourage the House to swiftly pass this legislation.”

“Virginia’s tribes have waited far too long for federal recognition, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure the rightful status of Virginia’s tribes in our nation’s history,” said **Rep. Scott**.

“Virginia’s Native American tribes played a vital role in the early days of the Commonwealth and our country. They were there to greet and assist the first English settlers at Jamestown. But through a gross injustice, they have not received the same Federal recognition as other Native American tribes, which has placed them at a distinct disadvantage,” **Rep. Connolly said**. “I am pleased to join my colleagues in this bipartisan effort to correct a long-standing discrimination.”

“Our path leading up to today has been difficult. Difficulties the Virginia tribes have faced never broke our will. Doing the right thing may not always be easy, but doing the right thing is always right,” **said Chief Steve Adkins of the Chickahominy tribe**. “We see the dawning of a new day and with the support evidence the members of Congress standing with us today, our hope is renewed and our expectations are high. We will prevail.”

**To read a fact sheet on the legislation, please visit:** <http://moran.house.gov/sites/moran.house.gov/files/documents/ThomasinaEJordanAct.pdf>

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